THE Best Gift, OR, GOD'S CALL UPON YOUNG MEN for their HEARTS.

Delivered in a Sermon to

YOUNG MEN.

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THE BEST GIFT, &c.

Prov. 23. part of the 26th verſe. *My Son, Give me thine Heart.*

Solomon was not only a King, but a Prophet; not only a Prince, but a Preacher; and in the name of God he calleth upon all the children of men, eſpecially young men, by the name of his Son, for their Heart; that they would preſent the Lord with the gift of the Heart: As in the later clauſe of the verſe he directeth the eye of their mind unto the obſervation of Gods way, which he calleth his way; *Let thine eyes obſerve my Wayes*; ſo in this firſt clauſe he directeth their hearts unto God in himſelf, whom he doth repreſent; *My Son, give me thine heart.*

Hence obſerve,

Doct. *That all men, eſpecially young men, ought to give their Heart unto God.*

In handling of this point, I ſhall ſhew, 1. What is meant by the Heart. 2. What it is to give God the Heart. 3. Why all men, eſpecially young men, ought to give God their Hearts. 4. Make ſome application.

1. What is meant by the Heart? The Heart in Scripture is frequently taken for the whole Soul, as including all its powers and faculties; thus *Mat.* 15. 8. *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips*, there was the worſhip of their outward man; *but their heart is far from me*; the worſhip of the Soul and inward man was wanting. So *Rom.* 2. 28, 29. *He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumciſion which is outward in the fleſh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumciſion is that of the heart in the ſpirit*, &c. And we ſhall find in the Scripture, that every faculty is ſometimes called by the name of the Heart; The Underſtanding, *Eph.* 4. 18. *Being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their hearts.* The Conſcience, 1 *Joh.* 3. 20. *For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things.* The Memory, *Luk.* 2. 19. *Mary kept all theſe things in her heart.* But chiefly, and moſt properly, the Heart is taken in Scripture for the Will and Affections, which are ſeated in the Heart, as the Underſtanding, Memory, Fancy, and Imagination are ſeated in the Head; and thus we may underſtand the acceptation of the word Heart in this place; namely, for the Will and Affections, yet not excluding the other faculties.

2. What is it to give God the Heart? Perſons give God their Hearts, when their Wills make choice of him as their chief Good, and they place their liking affections chiefly upon him; when their love is chiefly towards him, their deſires chiefly after him, their hopes and delights chiefly in him: Perſons give God their Hearts, when the

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open the door of theſe ſecret chambers, and let God in, and lodge him the deareſt embracements of their affections; when they give him full poſſeſſion of their hearts, and ſet him up in the higheſt room; when they give God the chief rule and command in their hearts, placing him upon the the throne; when they engage their hearts to the Lord in a ſolemn covenant to be his, and only his.

3. Why all men, eſpecially young men, ought to give their hearts unto God.

R. 1. Becauſe God hath right to their hearts: The Devil and Sin have got the poſſeſſion, but they have no right to the heart, they are uſurpers, and therefore ſhould be turned out; God only hath right to the heart, and that to the heart of young ones as well as others; young ones have not right to poſſeſs their inheritance left to them by their Fathers, whilſt they are under age, until they arrive at one and twenty years; but God hath right to poſſeſs the hearts of young ones, in the years of their minority, He hath a right to their hearts ſo ſoon as they are born, ſo ſoon as they have them themſelves; and that becauſe he hath made them, and he hath bought them; they belong to him by right of Creation, and by right of Purchaſe: The Body was form'd by God, but the Soul is infus'd, and cometh more immediately out of his hand; and it is but equal to return that to God which he hath made, to preſent God with the gift of that which is his own, the work of his own hands; eſpecially, when beſides his natural right to the heart, he hath made a purchaſe of it, he hath laid down a great price for it, even the price of his

Sons bloud; as the bloud of Chriſt hath purchaſed an everlaſting inheritance for men, ſo it hath purchaſed the hearts of men for God, to be his everlaſting habitation: See this Argument urged by the Apoſtle upon the *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19, 20. *Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorifie God in your body and in your ſpirit which are Gods.* God hath a double right both to to the body, and to the Spirit too; and as the heart is his by way of right, ſo all ought to make it his by way of tender and gift.

R. 2. All, eſpecially young men, ought to give God their hearts, becauſe God doth require them; ſome tacitly give away their right, by their not demanding of it; and ſome things which are the right of ſuch a man, yet are not his without a lawful demand; but God hath not only right to the heart, but he requireth it, he maketh a demand of it; he commandeth us to give it; See *Matth.* 22. 37, 38. *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy ſoul, and all thy mind: this is the firſt and great commandment.* It is not the eye, or the ear, or the tongue, or the knee, that God careth for, but the heart; the ſincere, and ſupreme love of the heart, is the chiefeſt and moſt comprehenſive commandment. Some debts are forfeited by Law, if, though they be demanded, they be not timely demanded; but God doth timely demand this debt of the Heart; He doth not ſtay till men are grown into elder years, but he demandeth their hearts when they are young; He calleth upon young men to give him their hearts, as in the Text; *My ſon, give me thine heart.*

R. 3. All, eſpecially young men, ought to give God

God their Hearts, becauſe God will accept of their Hearts. If a man will not accept of his right, he loſeth his right; and there is no obligation upon a man to tender a gift that is deſpiſed; but God will accept of the Heart, and nothing is more acceptable than the Heart, nothing is acceptable like the Heart, and nothing is acceptable without the Heart; all the good language of the lips, the devotion of the knees, and all bodily exerciſes, is of no worth in Gods account, all is flattery, all is mockery without the Heart: the Sacrifices under the Law, although of Gods own appointment, yet comparatively with the Sacrifice of the Heart, they were not eſteemed, and without the ſacrifice of the Heart, they were deſpiſed; but the Heart was never deſpiſed, never refuſed, but readily accepted, as the moſt delightful ſacrifice. See *Pſal.* 51. 16, 17. *For thou deſireſt not ſacrifice* (that is, comparatively) *elſe would I give it; thou delighteſt not in burnt-offerings, the Sacrifices of God are a broken ſpirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe.* God doth not deſpiſe the heart, yea, He deſireth, and delighteth in the Sacrifice of the Heart, when it is offered up unto Him by the hands of Chriſt, our great High Prieſt in Heaven: a heart broken and bleeding for ſin, gaſping and breathing after God, is very pleaſing and acceptable. And as God will accept the Hearts of any, ſo eſpecially the Hearts of young ones; the ſooner any bring their Hearts unto God, the better is he pleaſed; the Roſe is ſweeteſt in the bud, before it be quite blown; and the love of Youths to God hath a great fragrancy, and is very ſweet and delightful to Him.

R. 4. All, especially young men, ought to give God their Hearts, because he doth best deserve them; not only as he hath a right to them, of which before, but also as he is the most deserving object; Nothing is worthy of their Hearts beside Him, or in the least degree of comparison with Him.

1. If Lovelineſs do deserve Love, God is altogether Lovely; this cannot be said of any creature in the world, which may be apt to draw away the Heart; the creatures indeed may have lovelineſs, but the lovelineſs of creatures is inferiour, Gods lovelineſs is supreme; the lovelineſs of creatures is defective, Gods lovelineſs is perfect; the creatures may have some lovelineſs, but God hath all lovelineſs; the creatures lovelineſs is derivative, Gods lovelineſs is from himself, and whatsoever lovelineſs the creatures have, they derive it from Him; and therefore, even that lovelineſs is eminently in Him; and moreover, such lovelineſs as is infinitely beyond that. What is the Beam in comparison of the Sun? What is the Stream in comparison with the Fountain? What is the drop in comparison with the Ocean? And what is creatures lovelineſs, in comparison with the Creator's lovelineſs? Indeed God's lovelineſs is not visible, like some creatures-lovelineſs, because God is a Spirit, and his lovelineſs spiritual; but Gods lovelineſs is not the leſs because it is not corporal and visible, but the more, because not so low and inferiour, and subject to alternations, as bodily beauty is; as the beauty of the mind adorned with wisdom and grace, is far beyond the beauty of the body of the rareſt symmetry, and mixture of colours;

lours; ſo the beauty of God which is ſpiritual, doth infinitely excell all created beauty, whether of body, or of mind. Gods lovelineſs cannot be diſcerned with the eye of the body, but it may be viewed with the eye of the mind, with the eye of faith, through the illuminations of the ſpirit; indeed the beauty of his face cannot be ſeen by any in the body, the viſion of this is fit only for Angels, and is reſerved for the Saints in Heaven; yet in his back parts there is infinitely more lovelineſs to be ſeen, than in the face of any creatures whatſoever; if there could be a compoſition of all created lovelineſs in one perſon, it would fall infinitely ſhort of the lovelineſs of God, in any one of his excellencies and perfections. Hence was that deſire of *David*, *Pſal.* 27. 4. *One thing have I deſired of the Lord, that will I ſeek after, that I may dwell in the houſe of the Lord all the dayes of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple.* And *Pſal.* 63. 1, 2. *O God, thou art my God; early will I ſeek thee, my ſoul thirſteth for thee, my fleſh longeth for thee, as in a dry and thirſty land, where no water is; to ſee thy power and thy glory, ſo as I have ſeen thee in the Sanctuary.*

2. If ſutableneſs do deſerve love, there is infinitely more of this in God unto the Heart, than in any thing elſe that any may ſet their hearts upon; Indeed ſenſitive objects are more ſutable unto the bruitiſh part, I mean the ſenſes, in which many bruits do excell men; but God is moſt ſutable to the moſt excellent and noble part of man, which is the ſoul; He is a ſutable good, and the only ſutable good for the Heart, becauſe he is the only chief good; nothing beneath, nothing beſides the chief

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good, can give true satisfaction to the Soul; none but God can fill up the large and immense desires of the Heart: the house may be filled with goods, the bags may be filled with silver and gold, the cabinets may be filled with jewels; but none of these things can fill the Heart; the eye may be tired with seeing, and the ear wearied with hearing, and all the senses glutted and cloyed with their proper objects; but none of these objects are sutable to the Soul; and therefore cannot fill, and satisfie its desires. Earthly riches are uncertain and thorny; worldly honours are vain and windy; sensual pleasures are thin and empty; and all are of short continuance, and very transitory; and what then can they all do to give satisfaction unto a rational Soul, which is a spiritual substance? to an immortal soul, which must abide when the body is dropt off into the dust, and all these things are vanish'd out of sight, and which must live so long as the eternal God shall live. God only is the sutable good for the Soul, the creatures are not so far beneath the Soul, as God is above it; the creatures have not so much emptiness, as God hath fulness; the creatures have not such insufficiency, as God hath All-sufficiency; he that is Self-sufficient, must needs be All-sufficient; an Ocean surely is sufficient to fill a Bucket or a Nut shell: though ten-thousand worlds are not sufficient to fill one Soul; yet one God that is All-sufficient can fill ten thousand worlds of souls. It is a great expression, *Eph.* 3. 20, 21. *Now to him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us; to him be glory*, &c. He can do above, abundantly above, exceeeding abundantly

dantly above; in the original the words are ὑπὲρ ἐκ περισσοῦ, above abundantly, He can do infinitely beyond, not only our Prayers, and what we can ask, but alſo our conceptions, and what we can think; We may ask for great things, mountains of Gold, ſeats amongſt the Starrs, the moſt delicious things for the ſenſe; but God can do more than this for us; and if he doth not give ſuch things, becauſe they are not ſo good, he giveth that which is better; a little true Grace is beyond all; and God can do beyond what we can ask in ſpiritual riches; the riches of glory are exceedingly abundantly beyond the riches of grace; we may conceive and think more than we can have confidence, or find words to ask; but God can do for us beyond our either deſires or thoughts; yea, there is more in himſelf than we can imagine: God is a fountain of goodneſs, which is alwayes running, overflowing, and ever-flowing; He is a treaſury of all good things, which can never be exhauſted and emptied. Surely then God is the moſt ſutable good for the Heart, and moſt deſerveth the Heart.

3. If Love do deſerve the Heart, and call for return of Love, ſurely God hath infinitely more of this, than any elſe; none can match him in lovelineſs, and none can match him in Love: See *Joh.* 3. 16. *God ſo loved the world, that he gave his onely begotten Son,* &c. God ſo loved the world; How did he love the world? There is no compariſon to ſet it forth by, nothing great enough to expreſs it, it is too big to be put into the ſcales with any creature-love, except you would weigh vaſt mountains in one balance, and a light feather in the other;

ther; yea, I may ſafely ſay, that the ſmalleſt duſt on the ground, or the leaſt mote that flyeth in the air, may better be compared with the whole globe of the Earth for weight, than the love of any creature can be compared with the love of God to Mankind; and therefore if you ask how God loved Mankind, the anſwer muſt not be by a compariſon, for it paſſeth compariſon, and it paſſeth comprehenſion: but it is ſet forth by the expreſſion of it, in giving his onely begotten Son for men, that believing in him, they might not periſh, but have everlaſting life; here is love, not in word ſo much as in deed; love in a love-token, in a gift, and ſuch a gift as is unvaluable; a gift ſo neceſſary, as without which, eternal ruine could not be avoided; ſo beneficial, that by it, and with it, eternal life and happineſs is obtained. Gods love is ſo great, in giving his Son, that when the Apoſtle *John* doth ſpeak of it, he telleth us not onely that God hath Love, but that God is Love, 1 *Joh.* 4. 8, 9, 10. *God is love*; *In this was manifeſted the love of God towards us, becauſe God ſent his onely begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and ſent his ſon to be a propitiation for our ſins.* Creatures have love, it is a quality in them, and hath degrees; the higheſt capacity which we have for love is but as it is a quality, and even in that which we are capable of, we are deficient, whilſt in this world; but Love in God is not a quality, for a quality is an accident, and there are no accidents in God; and therefore it is his eſſence, *He is Love*; there is a βάθος, a depth in the expreſſion, which we cannot fathom. If the Apoſtle cryeth out,

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Rom. 11. 33. *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdome and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his wayes past finding out!* We may also cry out in an extasie of admiration, O the depth of the riches of the goodness and love of God! how unsearchable are his mercies, and the wayes of his grace past finding out! Apprehend we may something of Gods love, but comprehend it we cannot. Who ever did, or could look into the depth of Gods heart? The heart of man is deep, but the heart of God is far deeper; and indeed, in comparison with God, the streams of our Love are but small brooks, and shallow rivulets, unto the dep current, and bottomless ocean of Love in the heart of God to sinners, through Jesus Christ. Gods Love is First, Free, Tender, Unchangeable, from everlasting to everlasting: But I must not lanch too deep into this subject of Gods Love, which in many discourses of those that have the most raised apprehensions, and sweetest tasts of it, cannot be set forth with any sutableness unto its greatness. Now such love of God surely doth deserve the Heart, and the return of the choicest and chiefest affections which the children of men can possibly present him withall. Love doth usually draw forth particular, and endeared Love, more than Lovelinesse; but when such infinite Lovelinesse, Sutableness, and withall such infinite incomparable Love, do meet in one God, surely we must say that he is the most deserving object for the Love.

R. 5. Lastly, All, especially young men, ought to give God their Hearts, because he will best use their Hearts; their Hearts will be abused by any thing

thing they give them unto, except it be God alone. If they give their Hearts to the world, it will debase and degrade them; but if they give their Hearts unto God, He will advance and ennoble them; if the creatures have their hearts, they will impoverish them, but if God have their Hearts, He will enrich them; if Sin get their Hearts, it will deform them, but if God get their Hearts, He will beautifie them; if Lust be received into their Hearts, it will defile them, but if God be received into their Hearts, He will cleanse them. If God have not the Heart, the Devil, and the World, and Lust will possess it, and be sure they will abuse it. Better it is a thousand fold to entertain God into the Heart, than any other inhabitant, He having promised to dwell where he is entertained, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. *For ye are the Temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in you, and walk in you:* and be sure He will use the Hearts well where he dwells. The Devil and Lust make the Heart a Dungeon, but Gods presence maketh the Heart a Palace; God hath two Palaces, the one is the highest Heavens, the other is the lowest Hearts; and where God dwelleth, he will bring his own Furniture; He will throw out of doors the rotten furniture of Sin, which he findeth, and bring in the furniture of Grace, he will, as it were, hang the Heart with the rich Tapistry, and curious Embroidery of the Spirit, that He may take delight in his Habitation, adorned with his own Ornaments. And He will bring in his own Provisions too, and feast them with his Love, and the most kind expressions thereof, which shall yield such peace and satisfaction, such comfort and sweetness, and sometimes such ra-

raviſhing joys, as have not entred into the hearts of the carnal and worldly to conceive. Moreover, He will watch over the Heart, and defend it from many miſchiefs and dangers, from many ſnares and temptations, from many ſins, and thoſe ruines which ſin doth lead the ungodly unto. To conclude, By the Grace which He giveth the Heart here, He will qualifie and prepare it for glory hereafter; and at length, when the Soul now given to him, ſhall be ſeparated from the Body, it ſhall not want an habitation, for He will receive it into the deareſt cloſets, and eternal embracements of his Love. Surely then God will beſt uſe the Heart, and therefore all ſhould give their Hearts unto Him.

The Application.

Uſe 1. BY way of Information.

HEnce learn, that none have the diſpoſe of their own Hearts, none have liberty to give their Hearts as they pleaſe; to chooſe, or love, or deſire, or delight in what, and in whom they pleaſe. It is the ſpeech of the ungodly, *Pſal.* 12. 4. *Our lips are our own, who is Lord over us?* and it is a more ungodly ſpeech to ſay, Our Hearts are our own, who is Lord over us? There is nothing which any can call their own, properly and ſtrictly, except it be ſin; whatever any are, or have, they owe it unto God, from whom they have received it; but above all, God claims his right to the Heart, and He is moſt jealous of the Heart,

Heart, and none may give away their Hearts from him.

2. Learn here, God hath disposed of our Hearts better than we could or would dispose of them our selves: if God had not directed our Hearts to himself, and commanded us to give them to him, we should foolishly dispose of them unto inferiour things, which are wholly unworthy of them, and which would wofully abuse them; as all such do dispose their Hearts who give no heed unto this command.

3. Learn here, that God hath made that to be our duty to give our Hearts to him, which is our great privilege, that we may give our hearts to him; this commandment surely is not grievous, but most reasonable and sweet; God is not beholding to us for our Hearts, but we are beholding unto him that he will accept of them.

4. Learn here the difference between the wicked and the righteous; the difference doth not lye in their riches; for when many of the righteous be poor in this world, multitudes of wicked men do abound in wealth; it doth not lye in worldly grandeur and dignity, usually the wicked are advanced to the highest seat of honour, and are esteemed when the righteous are low, and under disgrace: It doth not lye in their food and apparel; *Dives* is arrayed in purple, and fine linnen, and fareth deliciously every day, when *Lazarus* lyeth at his gate, hungry, and in rags. It doth not lye in any beauty and strength of body, in any natural parts or acquired abilities of mind; some that have very foul insides, are outwardly fair and beautiful; and many are ignorant of the mysteries of salvation

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who are great Scholars in other things, and of high eſteem for worldly wiſdom and prudence; when the righteous, many of them, have a contemptible outſide, and are of very mean natural, and acquired abilities. But the difference between the wicked and the righteous, and that wherein the righteous do excell all the wicked in the world, is in the diſpoſing of their hearts; the wicked give their hearts to the creature, ſome to the dung of earthly pelf, others to the filth of ſenſual delight, others to the wind of worldly eſteem; ſome give their hearts to their Friends, others to their Lands, others to their Hawks and Hounds; and all the wicked are of ſuch a low and inferiour ſpirit, that they let their Hearts ſink beneath themſelves, unto ſomething that debaſes them; but the righteous they lift up their hearts to him that is above them, whereby they are advanced, they diſpoſe their hearts unto God, who is the chief good; when the ſtream of the wicked mans affections runneth downwards, theirs runneth upward; and ſurely of all others they have the greateſt wiſdome, and true heigth and nobleneſs of ſpirit, whoſe hearts are raiſed ſo high, as to be joyned unto the Lord.

Uſe. 2. For reproof of ſuch as give away their Hearts from God; And are there not too many ſuch in this place? God hath your ears ſometimes, and your lips, and your knees ſometimes, and your bodies, it may be, are often preſented before him in the outſide of Religious duties; but hath God your hearts? Have you preſented God with this gift? with this ſacrifice? without which, all other ſacrifices of your lips, and outward devo-

tion, are but a vain oblation; yea, deſpiſed, and an abomination unto him? Young men, you are diſpos'd of by your Friends, ſome to this Calling, and ſome to that; but Friends have not the diſpoſe of your Hearts, you have diſpos'd of them your ſelves; and have not too many of you diſpos'd away your hearts from God unto the creature? Hath not vanity and the world, and ſome fooliſh, filthy, and deceitful Luſt the chief room and poſſeſſion of your hearts? God hath called for your Hearts, but you have not hearkened; God hath knocked at the door, but you have not opened; He hath in his Word, and by his Spirit, woed for your chiefeſt affections, but you have hitherto given him a denial and repulſe; when you have liſtned to the Devil, and readily opened your Hearts to the world, and given forth of your deareſt loves and delights to the creatures; you have been deaf unto God, and your Hearts ſhup up againſt him, and fooliſhly with-held your affections from him. Conſider your great ſin herein.

1. You that give away your hearts from God, are guilty of Heart-Idolatry; that which you chiefly love, and deſire, and delight your ſelves in, is your God: If it be meats and drinks for your belly, your belly is your God, *Philip.* 3. 19. *Whoſe God is their belly*: If it be Gold and Silver, and the riches of the World, Riches are your God: And therefore Covetouſneſs is called Idolatry, *Col.* 3. 5. *Covetouſneſs which is Idolatry*. Whatever it be that you ſupremely love, that is your God, and the Idol of your hearts, if it be any thing beneath, and beſide the true God. And can any of theſe Gods hear

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your Prayers? Can they ſave you in your troubles, if you call upon them? Can they deliver you from wrath to come? Can they abide with you, to be your eternal portion?

2. You that give away your Hearts from God, are guilty of Spiritual Adultery; your Maker is, or ſhould be your Husband, and you go a whoring from him, when you give your Hearts chiefly to any perſon or thing beſides him; you commit Spiritual Adultery with any creature which you receive into the embracements of your deareſt affections; and therefore ſuch whoſe hearts are chiefly addicted to the world, and to its friendſhip, are called Adulterers and Adultereſſes, *Jam.* 4. 4 *Ye Adulterers and Adultereſſes, Know ye not that the friendſhip of the world is enmity with God?*

3. You that give away your hearts from God, are guilty of great injuſtice; your Hearts do of right belong to God, as hath been proved; He hath made them, and he hath bought them; and you may as juſtly give away money which belongeth to another, or goods which belong to another, or houſe and lands which belong ao another, as give away your Hearts to any other, which do of right belong unto God.

4. You that give away your Hearts from God, are guilty of great folly; you are hereby not only unjuſt towards God, but you are injurious towards your ſelves; God hath not need of your Hearts, but you have need to give them to him; your loſs is great, by with-holding your Hearts from God, you loſe the heart of God which you ſhould have in exchange; you loſe the favour of God, which is infinitely beyond the favour of

men; you lose the peace of conscience, which is the Souls feast; you lose the joyes of the Holy Ghost, which are unspeakably sweet and glorious: you love all that communion with God, and communications of the richest spiritual supplies which you might have from God, if you gave your Hearts unto him; hereby you lose your souls, which is the greatest loss; you lose your salvation, and the eternal crown and glory which you are capable of. And what do you gain by giving away your Hearts from God? you look indeed for great satisfaction and delight, and a happiness which the things you chiefly desire and love should yield unto you; but be sure you will come off with disappointment, none of these things can give that which they have not; something indeed you will gain by giving your Hearts to the creatures; namely, deep wounds of conscience, heart-piercing sorrows, smarting scourges sometimes of afflictions; or if your life be more pleasant, and conscience for a while asleep, at your latter end you are like to be utterly consumed with terrours; or if you be not awakened then, be sure you will be awakened in the flames of Hell. Fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest of Gods wrath, and most dreadful indignation, shall be the eternal portion which you will gain by your preferring the creature above God in your affections. And what can be more fooliſh, more injurious to your selves than this sin?

Use 3. For exhortation of all men, especially of you that are young men, to give your Hearts unto God. This is the first day of the new year, and

and ſome of you do bring New-years gifts to one another, be perſwaded to preſent God with the New-years gift of your Hearts; the Devil, that old Serpent, and the World, that old Cheat, have had your Hearts all the old Year; and ſome deceitful Luſts have hitherto gained and poſſeſſed your Affections; be perſwaded to call off, and pluck your hearts now at length out of the hands of theſe enemies, which ſeek after your deſtruction, and to offer them up unto God for a New-years gift this New-years day, and as a new and living ſacrifice which will be very acceptable unto God, who is the God of your Salvation. Some of you have nothing of your own, which you can give unto men, without wronging your Maſters, or your Parents; but all of you have hearts of your own, which you may give to God, and which you cannot keep from him, without wronging him, and wronging your ſelves too.

Young men, it may be you have given your Hearts to Delight and Pleaſure, the Goddeſs which moſt in the world do adore: But ſit down and conſider, whether ſenſual pleaſure, doth deſerve your Hearts; you have taſted a little of its ſweetneſs, and hope for a great deal more; yea, ſo much as ſhall give ſatisfaction and contentment; but you will find emptineſs and vanity in the enjoyment, bitterneſs and miſery to be the conſequent of that pleaſure which your Hearts do ſo much love and deſire. *Solomon*, who had as great a confluence of creature-delights, as any man living, and upon trial, had found all to be vanity and vexation of ſpirit in the iſſue, doth from his

own experience, warn young men againſt indulging the fleſh, and giving their hearts unto any ſenſual-delights: Indeed he ſeemeth in his firſt words to give allowance to young men to take their pleaſures, and to walk in this way of their hearts; but his ſpeech is ironical; for withall he tacitly intimates unto them how dearly they ſhould pay for their pleaſures, when God ſhould bring them unto Judgment, *Eccleſ.* 11. 9. *Rejoyce, O young man, in thy youth, and let thine heart chear thee in the dayes of thy youth, and walk in the wayes of thy heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes; but know that for all theſe things God will bring thee unto judgment.* As if he ſhould have ſaid, Young ones, be as merry and frolick as you liſt; take your fill of ſenſual Pleaſures if you think good: Smell at every flower; ſuck at every breaſt; taſte and feed on every dainty diſh; drink, and drink deep of every ſweet cup: Bathe your ſelves in the ſtreams of all creature-delights; run into every pleaſant embracement; melt away in ſoft pleaſures; indulge your ſenſual appetite to the height; gratifie every luſt to the full; withhold from your ſelves nothing which is pleaſing to your fleſh; do whatever ſeemeth good in your own eyes; be chearful, and rejoyce all your youthful dayes; ſeek, gather, and enjoy with all freedom whatever is delightful to your hearts, or pleaſant to your eyes: This do, if you think good, and that it is your intereſt: *BUT KNOW, that for all theſe things God will bring you unto judgement*: Believe, remember, and ſeriouſly conſider, that there is a day of reckoning not far off, a day of judgement coming, when you will

will be called to an aecount; and when all your delights and pleaſures will vaniſh like the cloud, and be fled for ever out of your ſight; then your moſt ſweet delights will be turned into Gall and Wormwood; then horrible pain and everlaſting torment will take the room of your momentany pleaſures; and as you like the one, ſo indulge your ſelves in the other. Or it may be, it is the honour and eſteem of men which too many of you that are young are moſt enamoured with, and have addicted your hearts unto; Some of you, though you have not the golden chain about your neck, have gotten the chain of Pride and ambition about your Heart, whereby it is captivated and led away from God unto any kind of Practices, which may likely get you a name, and lift you up in others eſteem: And is it not to be feared, that ſome of you make uſe of Religion as a footſtool to raiſe you a little higher, or as a ſtirrup to advance you into the ſeat of ſome kind of repute, and as a cloak to cover ambitions deſigns? And is any kind of honour, either amongſt the ungodly, or the religious, worthy of your hearts? Doth it deſerve the higheſt room in your affections? Is it fit that Pride ſhould ſit in the throne which doth belong to God? Your affections are hungry, will they be ſatisfied with wind? If they be filled ſometime, will they, can they herewith be ſatisfied? Do you not loſe honour, by loving it and deſiring it inordinately? and that higher honour than the honour which you may deſire, but never attain unto? I mean, do you not loſe the honour and eſteem of God, which is infinitely beyond all the higheſt honour and eſteem of men? *Honor eſt in honorante*, Honour is not

in him that is honoured, but in him that honoureth; and is that so amiable which is not in your selves, but in anothers breast? or if you do desire honour, is worldly honour the most desirable, which is of all things the most uncertain, and most inconstant? Is any honour so sure and so great; as the honour which the Great Jehovah hath for all that truly love and fear him? And what sweetness can you really find in others good esteem of you, when you have so much reason to dis-esteem your selves? Must not their esteem of you be for low and inferiour things, which are not praise-worthy? or else must not their esteem be built upon a mistake? and can you take any great comfort in others mistake? Can this be a happiness and chief good for a rational Soul? Suppose that your ambition were gratified, and you advanced not only in esteem, but also in a high place of dignity; are not all high places very slippery? And by how much your place is the higher, would not your fall be the lower? If you were Kings or Emperours, Death would quickly turn off your Crowns, and pluck your robes off your backs, and your Scepters out of your right hands. And what honour do the worms give to the bodies of Great ones, when they are brought down to the dust? What honour will God give to the Souls of wicked Great ones when they are out of the body? What honour will the Lord Jesus give to such at the last day, when he appeareth with his glorious train of Angels, to Judge the world in righteousness? Will not all the honour of wicked men be then turned into shame, disgrace, everlasting contempt, and confusion of face? And is it good then

to

to ſet your heart upon Honour inſtead of God? Or, it may be, young ones, your hearts are not upon the wing to carry you either to the mountains of pleaſures, or the mountains of honour; but they are groveling upon the earth; you are got under it, and are digging for Mines and Treaſures there: I mean, that poſſibly your Hearts are moſt addicted to the gain of earthly riches; and are they more worthy of your Hearts than God? Can they yield more ſatisfaction unto you, or abide more ſurely by you, than thoſe pleaſures or honours of the world, which I have been endeavouring to diſgrace? If you had Gold like the duſt, and Silver like the ſand, and Jewels like the ſtones of the field; if you had as much wealth as your hearts could wiſh, could you find the contentment your hearts do deſire in any of theſe things? Beſides, if riches in great abundance could give contentment, (which they cannot) are you certain to get ſuch abundance? Hath the world Treaſures enough to enrich all that ſo dearly love and deſire it? Are not the times hard? Is not trading low? Is it not with great difficulty that any do get an eſtate? Do not ſuch as will be rich run themſelves into temptations and ſnares which entangle them, and enſlave themſelves to many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, which at length undo them, and drown them in perdition and deſtruction? 1 *Tim.* 6. 9. Read, and conſider what the Wiſe man ſpeaketh, *Prov.* 23. 5. *Wilt thou ſet thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches cerainly make themſelves wings, they flee away like an Eagle towards Heaven?* Will you ſet your hearts upon that which is not, that is, which is not what it

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ſeemeth to be; or which is of ſo ſhort continuance, as if it had no being; Riches certainly make themſelves wings, like Eagles, and are flying away from you; and will you make your ſelves wings like Eagles, and fly after them? Are you like to overtake them when they are upon the wing to be gone? and when they are gone upon the wing, will they return again? or if they ſhould abide ſo long as you abide? will not death make wings for you e're long, upon which, willing or unwilling, you muſt flee away, and leave all your riches behind you? Think how death will ſtrip you of all your wealth, and bereave you of all your riches? Naked you came into the world, and naked you muſt return; and think how grievous it will be for you to part with thoſe things unto which you have given your heart? Will it not be a tearing to your hearts to be disjoyned from that unto which they are now ſo glewed? And when withall you think that you muſt not only leave all that you ſo much love, but alſo that you muſt go to a place of moſt exquiſite and eternal torments in Hell, which you ſo much fear? Let me then perſwade all of you, eſpecially you that are young men, to call off your hearts from all theſe things, which the Devil makes uſe of as baits to catch hearts withall, as ſnares to entangle and captivate affections; look to the hook through the bait; look to the priſon, whither the Devil, in ſuch chains which he hath laid upon your affections, is leading you; withdraw your hearts from the world, and every thing therein, and now preſent it unto the Lord: The Lord hath ſent me this day to woe your Hearts, O, that I could win your Hearts for him

You

You are young men, and moſt of you (if not all) ſingle men; Suppoſe that the moſt lovely young woman that ever your eyes beheld, of ſuch ſtature, feature, and exact mixture of colours, as you never before ſaw one ſo beautiful; Suppoſe her birth and dowry to be far above you; Suppoſe her humble, like the ground, and of the ſweeteſt diſpoſition, that ſhe had none like her; and this perſon ſhould make tender of particular and moſt ardent Love unto any of you, and be willing to give her ſelf, and all that ſhe hath unto you; only did expect a return of Love on your part; I ſuppoſe there is not any of you who would refuſe and with-hold your Love. But what is any creature in compariſon with God? not ſo much as the duſt upon the ballance: his excellencies are infinitely beyond compare and comprehenſion too. I have ſet forth the Lovelineſs of the Lord, as infinitely exceeding all creature-lovelineſs: I have ſet forth his Sutableneſs unto your Souls; and withall his infinite Love, and by me he maketh tender of himſelf, and his Love unto you, unto the meaneſt and moſt unworthy amongſt you, but he looketh for a return of Love on your part; By me he calleth for your Heart: think what an indignity it will be to the Lord, what a folly and injury to your ſelves, ſhould you refuſe and withhold your hearts from him. God doth by me call for your hearts, they are his due; if any elſe can claim ſuch right to them, let them have them: if any elſe do ſo much deſire or deſerve them, let them have them; if any elſe will ſo well uſe them, let them have them; if any elſe can ſo advance, beautifie, enrich, ſatisfie and fill them with

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ſuch peace and joy, let them have them; No, no there is no perſon can do it; nothing can do it in this world; and will you ſtill with-hold your Hearts from God? Why are you ſo backward to beſtow your affections upon God? Why ſo loth to give your hearts to him that hath given you your hearts; given you all that you are, all that you have, that hath given his Son for you, and proffereth to give his Son to you; and with him pardon and peace, and many ſpecial favours here, and the Kingdome of Heaven hereafter? What do you ſay, young men? Shall God have your Hearts or no? God doth not only call for them, and will accept of them, but he is loth to be denied; He doth by me entreat and beſeech you, that he might have them. In his intreaties of you, that you would be reconciled to him, he doth intreat you to give him your Hearts. God is reconciled to you, when he giveth to you his Son; and you are reconciled unto him, when you give him your hearts; then your enmity againſt him is laid aſide; and ſee Gods intreaties by Miniſters for this thing, 2 *Cor.* 5.20. *Now we are embaſſadours for Chriſt, as if God did beſeech you by us, we pray you, in Chriſts ſtead, be ye reconciled unto God.* Hear O Heavens! Wonder, O Angels! Admire, O Saints! Be aſtoniſhed, O Sinners! Be confounded, O Devils! that God ſhould not only be willing, to accept of Hearts, but deſire them! not only call for them, but intreat for them! that God ſhould intreat! intreat his creatures! intreat ſinners, traytors, rebells! perſons ſo mean, ſo vile! when he hath no need of them, that he ſhould intreat for Hearts, as if he were beholding

to

to them to give them! O wonderful! wonderful condeſcention! although you have ſtopped your ear ſo long, and refuſed your Hearts ſo often, yet the Lord doth ſtill intreat, and he would fain prevail with you for this gift, ſo beneficial, not to him to receive it, but unto you to give it. Upon my knees, (if that would do) I would beſeech you in the name of my Lord, that you would give your Hearts unto God: Methinks you ſhould not ſhut your ears to ſuch kind invitations; or when your ears are open, methinks you ſhould not ſhut your hearts againſt the Lord, that ſtandeth at thoſe doors and knocketh, and intreateth you to let him in, and give him room there. Methinks that Grief ſhould now ariſe againſt thoſe baſe, filthy luſts, which are got into the room of God, and Deſire ſhould ſtep forth, and invite the Lord in, to take poſſeſſion of that place which is due. Methinks your hearts now ſhould begin to open unto God, and the everlaſting gates of them ſhould be lifted up, that this King of Glory might be entertained, and exalted, and enthroned within you. Methinks Hatred ſhould now ariſe in your hearts againſt Sin, and a contempt of the World, with all the vanities thereof; and a fire of Love ſhould now methinks begin to enkindle within you. Look, young men, look upwards, Do you ſee nothing? Take up the Glaſs of the Word, and through this perſpective cannot you ſee the Lord of Heaven, full of marvellous, and moſt raviſhing beauty in his face; full of moſt free, tender, incomparable, and incomprehenſible love in his heart? If you can ſee but little, beg the eye of Faith, and light of the Spirit, and then you will

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ſee wonders, wonders of beauty, and wonders of love: And do not your hearts yet begin to move towards God? What do you ſay, young men? How many of your Hearts may I gain for God this day? Methinks every one of you ſhould be ready to ſay, Here's my Heart for the Lord; and here's my heart for the Lord; and here's my heart for the Lord. Will you now all of you engage your Hearts in Covenant to the Lord? willyou now withdraw your hearts from the World, and all its Luſts which hath uſurped them; and making choice of God for your chief good, Devote your Hearts, with your whole man to him, to be His, and His for ever. Conſent heartily unto this, young men, and the thing is done; your Hearts are God's, and God is yours, and yours for ever.

And if you would give your Hearts unto God;

1. You muſt give them preſently, delayes are dangerous; if you refuſe now, you may never be ask'd for them any more; this may be God's laſt Call, it may be now you have ſome movings and ſtrivings of the Spirit for your Hearts; if you do not now hearken and yield, God may withhold his Spirit for the future, and never ſtrive with you more.

2. You muſt give them freely, Don't think God is beholding to you to give them; but that you are beholding to him that He will accept of them.

3. You muſt give them fully; Don't reſerve any room in them for Sin, and harbour any baſe Luſt in any corner of your hearts.

4. You

4. You muſt give them reſolutely; with full purpoſe never to retract this gift; Gods gifts of his Grace to men are without repentance; and ſo muſt be your gift of your Hearts unto God: And if the Lord doth get your Hearts this day, I know he will get all; the Heart being the commanding part; Put your ſelves under God's command; hereby you will be in ſafeguard from the worſt of evils; I mean, the Reign of Sin, and Tyranny of the Devil here, and the Damnation of Hell in the other World; hereby your hearts will be near to Gods Heart whilſt you live, and they ſhall be brought nearer to him when you die; when abſent from the body, they ſhall be preſent with the Lord in glory, and abide with him to eternity.

FINIS.